Blood Clot In Lungs Kills Him

Insisted to the End He Was Not a Part Of Any Conspiracy

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By Richard Harwood
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Jack Ruby, the most celebrated executioner of the decade, died of a massive blood clot yesterday at the Parkland Memorial Hospital in Dallas.

He was, in his own troubled mind, "just a nobody from the ghettoes of Chicago" until Nov. 24, 1963. On that day, before a television audience of tens of millions, he murdered Lee Harvey Oswald who had 48 hours earlier, the Warren Commission later concluded, assassinated President John F. Kennedy in the streets of Dallas.

By his bizarre act, Ruby secured for himself a dubious place in American history and made more credible the unproved hypothesis that the President's murder was the product of a conspiracy.

Dies While Asleep

Ruby's death at 10:30 a.m. yesterday was more serene than the 55 years of his life. He was asleep when he stopped breathing in the same hospital in which both Oswald and President Kennedy died.

The cancer that riddled his body and put him beyond medical salvation was discovered Dec. 9, when he was taken to the hospital from the Dallas County Jail. He was so ravaged by the disease that he looked, one of his lawyers said, like "a man of 80 years."

In his last weeks he was incoherent much of the time and was tortured, his brother Earl reported, by the delusion that millions of American Jews were being executed in retaliation for his impulsive act of violence against Oswald.

'I Hear Them Screaming'

He was told by his brother, "That is not true, Jack. It is not true."

"Don't tell me! Don't tell me!" the stricken man replied. "I hear them screaming from the basement every night."

He had heard screams all his life and they were not all imaginary. As a child in Chicago, his home was a place of violence and abuse, presided over by a drunken father who

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was Chicago, the city of his birth.

One day in December, Gertz asked Ruby:

"What aout Oswald? Was he ever in your night club, did you ever meet him or see him?"

"The first time I ever saw Oswald was in the jail after he was arrested. I never saw him in my club and I never met him before in my life," Ruby said.

A few weeks after Ruby, 55, was found to have cancer, he expressed a wish to take a lie detector test to prove that all he said was true. His worsening condition precluded such a test.

He had received such a test from representatives of the Warren Commission on July 18, 1964. No interpretation of the test was made, on the groundv that the results were questionable because of Ruby's emotional condition.

Transcripts of the Warren interview show Ruby repeatedly saying he had more to tell, but that he would have to be taken from Dallas. He wanted to go to Washington. One critic of the Warren Report, Mark Lane, has implied something sinister in the fact that Ruby was not taken from Dallas.

"The things he said to me in utmost secrecy were things that could be said anywhere, Dallas or Washington," Gertz said. "I could not enter his mind, but I am certain to my satisfaction that there was no more to tell. Jack confabulated. He tried to insinuate knowledge.

"For example, when he shot Oswald, he was in a blackout. He knew he shot Oswald, but he had no real memory of the experience. The same thing is true about his explanation of why he shot Oswald. He said he did it because he wanted to spare Jacqueline Kennedy the ordeal of having to come back to Dallas for a trial. That was something he confabulated (wandering, under emotional pressure). It offended his pride to be called insane, so what he attempted to do is show that he knew from memory details about something when indeed it was something he learned about later."

Gertz, who like the other lawyers served without fee, was asked:

Was he satisfied that Ruby died telling the truth?

"Yes," he said.